

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5958

ANSWERED ON:04.05.2005

INTERNET SUBSCRIBERS

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of internet subscribers in the country, State-wise;
- (b) the percentage of population having access to internet, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to reduce the rental/accessibility charges for internet connection;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to promote internet in the Rural Areas?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) & (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) & (d) As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997, tariffs for telecom services are under purview of TRAI. The tariff for Internet services are under forbearance in terms of the provisions of Telecommunication Tariff Order (TTO)'99 and the service providers are at liberty to offer attractive tariffs keeping in view the usage pattern and other requirements of different classes of subscribers.

(e) The steps taken by the Government to promote Internet in rural areas are detailed below:

(i) Any company registered in India under Companies Act 1956 is eligible to apply for the ISP license.

(ii) License fee is waived upto 31.10.2003 and is Rs.1/- per annum thereafter under ISP license for providing Internet Access and content service and there is no entry fee under the license.

(iii) To promote proliferation of Internet in rural and urban areas, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) provides Internet services on local call basis throughout the country. Additionally, for the Rural Block Headquarters, free Internet Access and a 25% commission on Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) charge for accessing the Internet is provided to the Internet Dhabas (PCOs). Further, BSNL has provided Internet Dial up connections to 4066 Internet Dhabas operated through its franchisees.

(iv) Department of Information Technology (DIT) has also set up 487 Community Information Centres (CICs) in the hilly, far-flung areas of the country for socio-economic developments of these regions. CICs are a citizen's interface for Information Technology (IT) enabled e-government services and are provided with Very Small Aperture Terminal(VSAT) connectivity and computers and peripherals.